Skilled youth will form backbone of self-reliant India, says Adityanath



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, defence minister Rajnath Singh and chief minister Yogi Adityanath during the 5th National Skill Convocation in Lucknow on Saturday. HT PHOTO

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LUCKNOW: Chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said skilled youth will form the backbone of Viksit UP and Viksit Bharat.

Addressing the fifth National Skill Convocation here, he said, "Youth trained through Skill India will become the backbone of a developed and self-reliant India in 2047. When the country celebrates the centenary of Independence (2047), happiness will be on every face. Every woman will be leading society with self-reliance. Our goal is to provide employment to the youth, self-reliance to the farmers, and a respectable remuneration to the workers."

In 2015, the prime minister launched the Skill India campaign on World Youth Skills Day at Vigyan Bhavan, he said.

Through this, he attempted to allay the frustration and despair of the youth by providing a platform to the talent of India's youth, the world's largest young workforce, he added.

"PM Modi has worked to advance the Indian philosophy of "Ayogyo purushottam nasti, yojakstatra durlabha (No person is useless, the only thing lacking is proper guidance and a provider)," he said.

The chief minister stated that India is the youngest country in the world, and Uttar Pradesh is the youngest state in India, home to the largest number of youth.

Uttar Pradesh rapidly expanded the Prime Minister's Skill Development Mission after 2017, he said, adding that the strength of the youth within the state is being harnessed, resulting in over 1.7 million (17 lakh) youth trained under the Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission, and over 700,000 youth successfully securing jobs through campus selection.

He said that under the Deendayal Upadhyaya Rural Skill Scheme, more than 1.23 lakh rural youth were directly employed by providing training and residential facilities.

"When the world was ravaged by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, India was implementing the National Education Policy, which emphasised skill development alongside the traditional curriculum. Through Project Praveen, more than 250,000 students in over 1,700 secondary schools are receiving this benefit," he said. The chief minister discussed the state's young workforce was being prepared for emerging technologies and Industry 4.0. He stated that for successful industrial operations, the state government, in collaboration with Tata Technology, has launched new courses in emerging technologies, AI, robotics, drone technology, Internet of Things, 3D printing, and other trades tailored to industry demand, in over 150 ITIs. More than 12,000 trained youth are finding good employment through campus selection.

The chief minister stated that more than 50,000 trained youth found employment at the 2026 employment fair in the state, including more than 3,400 disabled youth.

The state has a large network of vocational education and skill development programmes in both the government and private sectors, he said.

To integrate all these, the process of developing the Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Skilling and Employment Zone has moved forward, he added. Union minister of state (independent charge) for skill development Jayant Chaudhary, Union minister of state for finance and BJP state president Pankaj Chaudhary, deputy chief ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya, Brajesh Pathak and Uttar Pradesh ministers Manoj Pandey and Kapil Dev Agarwal were among those present at the function.

Skill development linked to national security, defence production: Rajnath

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LUCKNOW: Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said skill development is no longer limited to generating employment and is crucial for nation-building and national security, citing the example of India's growing defence production sector.

Addressing the fifth National Skill Convocation here, Singh said the country's industries are expanding, and the nature of employment is undergoing transformation, making it essential for young people to continuously upgrade their skills.

"Today, the importance of skill development is not limited to securing employment. It is connected with nation-building and national security. An important example of this is our defence production," he said. Singh said under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, industries are growing, and the methods of working are changing rapidly.

"In such a situation, merely acquiring skills is not enough. It is also extremely important to keep up with the times. Therefore, our government is making efforts to ensure that skills of young people develop continuously through skilling, reskilling and upskilling initiatives," he said.

The defence minister said the economic strength of a country is determined not merely by its natural resources, capital or technological advancement but also by the capabilities and skills of its citizens.

"In our tradition, we have learnt that knowledge gives a person understanding, skills give them capability, and a combination of both makes them self-reliant," he said.

Singh said the National Skill Convocation has helped change the perception that convocation ceremonies are associated primarily with universities and higher academic degrees.

"Skill development is in no way inferior to formal education. Rather, it supplements and complements it," he asserted.

Highlighting the expansion of the country's skill development ecosystem over the past 12 years, Singh said more than 1.64 crore young people have received training under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) till June 2026.

He said the number of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in the country has increased from approximately 9,800 in 2014 to more than 14,000 at present.

However, he said, the significance of these figures lay in the transformation that skill development had brought to the lives of young people.

"When a young person from a small town or village receives training from an ITI and starts working in an industry, they do not merely earn a livelihood but also transform the economic condition of their family," he said. Similarly, a young person who establishes an enterprise using technical skills not only creates employment for themselves, but also generates opportunities for others, contributing to the goal of self-reliance, he added. Singh said a strong skill ecosystem has been made possible through the vision of Prime Minister Modi, who recognised that skills need to be developed in mission mode to realise the goal of a developed India.

Singh said the fifth National Skill Convocation is a special occasion as it is being held outside Delhi for the first time.

Congratulating Union minister of state (independent charge) for skill development and entrepreneurship Jayant Chaudhary for organising the national-level programme in Lucknow, Singh also described it as a matter of pride for Uttar Pradesh and congratulated chief minister Yogi Adityanath.

KEY DETAILS

- **Skills linked to national security:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said skill development is no longer limited to employment but is also important for nation-building and national security.
- **Defence production as an example:** He cited India's growing defence production sector as an example of how skilled manpower contributes to national security.
- **Focus on continuous learning:** He said young people must regularly upgrade their skills through skilling, reskilling and upskilling.

